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In order to insure that only those individuals who are capable of facilitating positive growth within others are chosen as Resident Assistants (R.A.'s), it is vitally important to use a method of selection that is as objective as possible. In an effort to meet this challenge, Holy Cross College initiated a three year study to develop such a measuring instrument that would identify the best student leaders. The method of investigation was descriptive and the tools of measurement were standardized personality tests, an interest inventory, and a sociometric type leadership questionnaire. The sample consisted of 300 sophomores and juniors currently enrolled at the College, who were trying for 60 R.A. positions. It was found that the higher the student rates on the sociometric questionnaire, the more self-assertive and friendly he rates, and if his preferences evolve around extraversion, sensing, and feeling, and if he focuses his judgment upon people and things rather than upon concepts and ideas, the more likely he will be capable of facilitating positive growth within others. (Author)

Can We Scientifically Select Residence Hall Staff?

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As a result of constantly increasing enrollments in institutions of higher learning, and as the educational element of housing's role in this environment has become more clearly defined, the problem of selecting personnel to staff these residence halls has become more acute. In response to this challenge and in the hope of sharpening up their selection practices, many student personnel administrators have found it necessary to enlarge and in some instances revise their existing method of selecting students as part-time staff to help meet this need. At the present time, many have also come to experience the realization that their selections can have deteriorative as well as constructive consequences on the residents within these potential living-learning centers. This is one of the chief reasons why it is vitally

important to develop a method of selection that is as objective as possible. Any hit or miss method of selection that relies purely on intuition or politicking could be dangerous and may have disastrous results regarding the integrating of the residence hall programs into the total educational program. We are then faced with the question--How can we develop a standardized measurement to select Residence Hall Staff?

Methods

At Holy Cross College, a three year study was initiated to see if such a standardized instrument could be developed that would scientifically and practically identify student helpers. Once identified and selected, it was felt that one would be able to train these student helpers--who were most capable of eliciting the greatest amount of constructive gain in others--to the degree that a system would be created whereby the best would be receiving the best training for the betterment of all students. Through empirical observation, the Dean of Men's Office concluded that those students having the capacity to become involved in a "helping" relationship--are respected by their peers--project a certain amount of social awareness--and are intelligent--are most likely to elicit the greatest student process involvement and ultimately the greatest gains in others. In an attempt to scientifically validate these intuitive conclusions, a sociometric type leadership questionnaire was implemented into the first stage of the study.

Over 800 questionnaires were administered to the sophomore and junior residents living on campus. All were asked to express a preference as to which members of his group would he most prefer to fill the R.A. position.

This was done so that we would be able to observe the peer-identified leaders

in comparison to the Dean of Men's Office selections. Not only did the questionnaire allow for comparisons, but it also helped establish an ability group that was fairly constant, thus facilitating the measuring of their characteristics in conjunction with their effectiveness in the RA position. Even in view of the fact that 75 per cent of the eligible peer identified leaders were chosen by the Dean's Office, it was felt that the questionnaire would not be practicable to employ every year in the selection process; if we did it might eventually become a popularity contest.

In stage two of the study, finds these highly selected student helpers being administered, The Edwards Personal Preference Schedule, (EPPS) a self-report used to measure motivation by manifested needs, The Bell Adjustment Inventory, (BAI) a self-report of the individuals life adjustments as he has experienced them, and finally The Myers-Brigg Type Indicator, (MBTI) also a self-report used to identify interest by peoples' basic preferences in regard to perception and judgment. These nonintellectual predictors were chosen because of their personality, motivational and interest measurement ability.

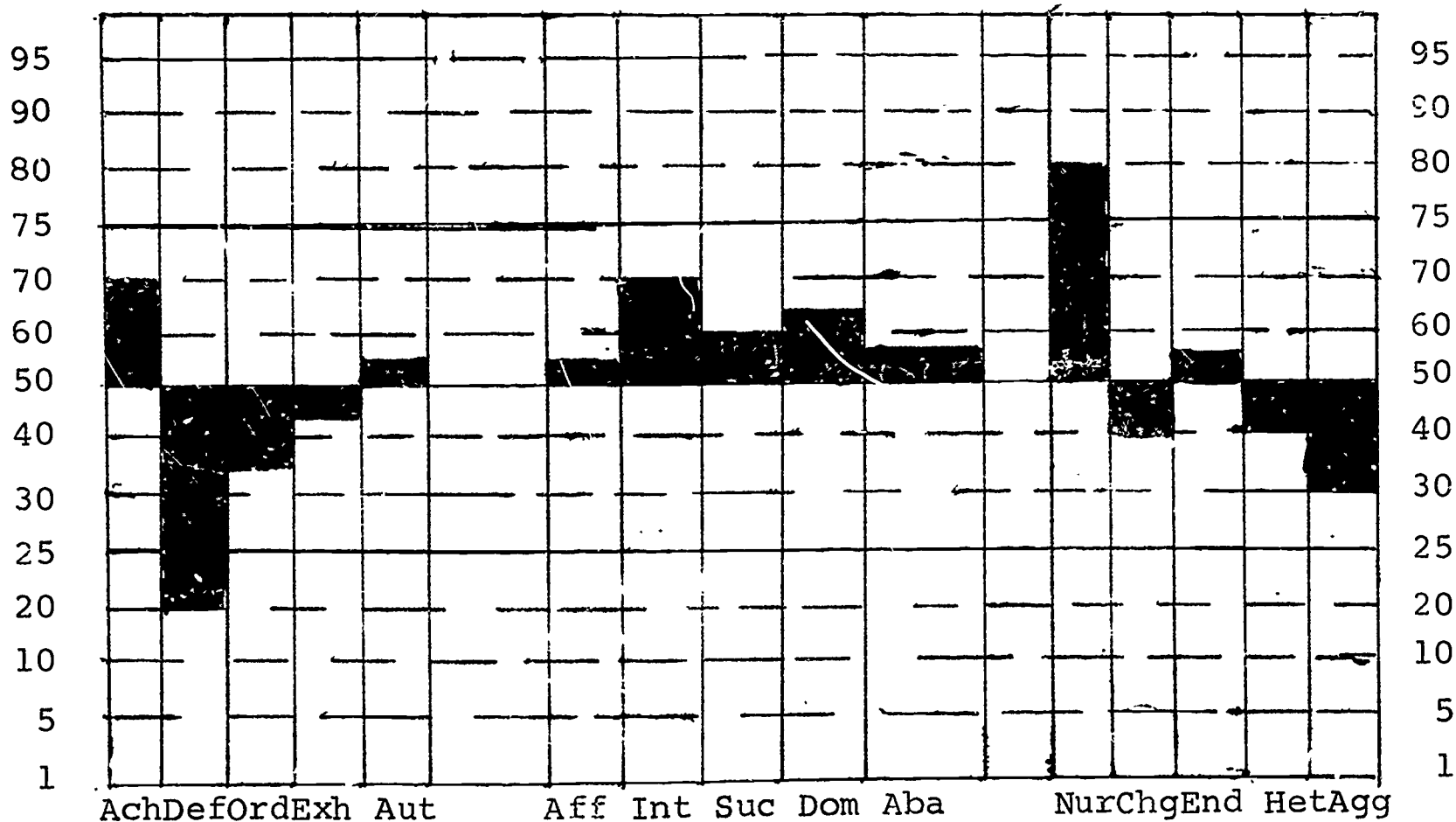
Finally, the results of these two stages were completed and categorized according to similarities. Realizing that there were degrees of difference in effectiveness within the R.A. group, the Dean's Office decided to separate the R.A.'s into three kinds of helpers--effective, satisfactory and unsatisfactory. This was done by designing a questionnaire, that originally was constructed by asking ourselves, the students and the R.A.'s as to what they considered was an effective R.A. and distributing it to the Dean's Office staff, the R.A.'s themselves and the residence hall members. By doing this the R.A. was evaluated

in five specific areas by three independent sources to determine his effectiveness as a R.A. The results were three categories with 20 R.A.'s in each group. Now all we had to do was compare them to each other by the tests and sociometric questionnaire results and hope that there would be significant differences to classify them.

Findings

In looking at the EPPS results as shown in Table 1 and keeping in mind the concept of needs as source of motivation--some measure of support seems

TABLE 1
THE RA GROUP PERCENTILE RATINGS ON EPPS



to be lent to the notion that RA's, as a group, more than the normative college group, tend to have needs that are--somewhat higher in achievement--are more inclined to seek friendship--and seek leadership opportunities that afford others the chance to confide in them about personal problems. At the same time

the Table indicates that the RA's as a group are less inclined to have needs that allow others the opportunity to make decisions for them and less interested in being the center of attention. As Table 2 indicates, effective RA's have significantly higher mean scores than ineffective RA's on Achievement, Order, Intraception, Dominance and Nurturance. Unsatisfactory RA's have significantly higher mean scores than effectively rated RA's on Deference, Exhibition, Succorance and Aggression.

Table 2

Group Comparisons of Mean Scores on EPPS

RA's	Ach.	Def.	Ord.	Exh.	Aut.	Aff.	Int.	Suc.	Dom.	Aba.	Nur.	Chg.	End.	Het.	Agg.
E	18.7	9.9	9.9	13.2	13.0	17.3	19.5	9.2	20.3	12.3	17.3	14.7	11.8	14.1	12.7
S	17.0	10.2	7.7	14.3	14.0	16.9	15.8	9.7	20.8	11.5	16.0	14.5	12.0	16.8	12.5
U	15.6	10.5	7.5	15.1	15.4	14.3	15.8	12.4	16.9	12.2	15.0	15.4	12.3	16.3	13.9

The BAI profiles, as a group, indicated no significant differences from the average college student population scores. But in looking at Table 3 and observing the Submissiveness, Emotionality and Hostility scales, one can conclude that there are certain individual traits that significantly differ within the group. That is, the effective RA's seem to be more constant in their scores than the other two groups and the unsatisfactory RA's had mean scores higher on all three scales, thus labeling them as more submissive, less emotionally secure and more hostile than the effectively rated RA's. Another interesting observation is that the satisfactory RA's had the lowest scores on Emotionality and Submissiveness Scales. This could mean that they are more

emotionally secure than the other two groups or they have answered the questions pertaining to this scale in a socially desirable way and not as they really wanted to.

Table 3

Group Comparisons of Mean Scores on BPI

RA's	Sub.	Emot.	Host.	Total Scores
E	6.8	6.5	6.3	19.6
S	5.3	4.9	6.8	17.0
U	10.5	8.1	7.6	26.5

The MBTI in predicting the interest of the RA's as a group resulted in a frequency pattern whereby they were more inclined to be extroverts and not introverts and focused their perception and judgment upon people and things rather than upon concepts and ideas. That is, the RA's as a group tend to be people who prefer intuition and feeling rather than sensing and thinking, and focus their attention on possibilities rather than facts and handle these with personal warmth rather than impersonal analysis. By observing the E row of Table 4 one can notice certain preferences that are conspicuously different and more frequent and higher in mean scores than in the U row. Among the most outstanding, the E rated RA's show preferences for the NFP profiles significantly more than the U rated RA's do. In observing

the per cent scores, one can compare their strength in comparison to the three groups. It is hard to escape the conclusion that the feelingness, intuitiveness and perceptionness profiles are major factors in accounting for the RA's effectiveness. The strength of these profiles becomes evident in that the mean

Table 4

Group Comparisons of Mean Scores, Frequencies and
Per Cent on the MBTI

RA'S	E - I	S - N	T - F	J - P
freq.	17 - 3	8 - 12	8 - 12	9 - 11
E mean	14.8 - 10.3	15.3 - 18.1	10.6 - 10.9	16.0 - 16.4
(N=20)%	85% - 15%	40% - 60%	40% - 60%	45% - 55%
freq.	14 - 6	8 - 12	9 - 11	12 - 8
S mean	19.3 - 8.0	16.5 - 15.3	11.2 - 10.1	18.3 - 11.0
(N=20)%	70% - 30%	40% - 60%	45% - 55%	60% - 40%
freq.	14 - 6	11 - 9	12 - 8	13 - 7
U mean	12.4 - 13.9	15.1 - 13.2	13.0 - 7.3	15.9 - 12.1
(N=20)%	70% - 30%	55% - 45%	60% - 40%	65% - 35%
Group freq.	45 - 15	27 - 33	29 - 31	34 - 26
Totals mean	15.7 - 10.7	15.6 - 15.5	11.6 - 9.4	16.7 - 13.2
(N=60)%	75% - 25%	45% - 55%	48% - 52%	57% - 43%

N score drops from 18.1 for the most effective to 13.2 for the unsatisfactory and the mean F score drops from 10.9 for the most effectively rated RA's to 7.3 for the unsatisfactory rated RA's and the mean P score drops from 16.4 to 12.1. These point differences in mean scores further supports the previous idea that the preferences of NFP over the STJ as ingredients of effectiveness and may help to differentiate between the unsatisfactory and the effective RA's

Conclusions

What must not be expected, of course, is that all RA's meeting the effectively defined characteristics of this research design will be effective in the RA position. However important a preference, a need or a motivational trait may be, they independently are not a sufficient condition for effectiveness. What is needed, is an instrument that combines these results with more to finally develop a standardized measurement device to select RA's. This present investigation has touched upon only a small segment of the total range of selectivity. Further research of a similar nature is needed to validate the findings that are possible in such a study across cultures. There are so many variables than can enter into a research design of this caliber that it is very important to have supportive studies. Student helpers can be useful in obtaining the goals of higher education or they can be retarding. If we, as educators, are to maximize the potential of our college residence halls, we must select effective RA's and not retarding RA's.

Next year 1968-1969 we will implement these conclusions into our selection process. We will have a controlled and an experimental group to determine how valid our process was in regards to effectiveness of the experimental RA's. True, this study has been a partial attempt to explicate some of the critical dimensions involved in developing a standardized measurement; however, it is a step towards demonstrating the possibility of eventually establishing such a standard. Our test results have run parallel to our intuitively derived characteristics, but how can one incorporate this multitude of potentially significant variables into one meaningful selection process is the challenge that I leave you with?

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